



Idaho's Citizen Commission for Reapportionment

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Pocatello Public Meeting
June 15, 2011
Pocatello City Hall
7-9pm

Co Chairman Frasure called the meeting to order and had the commissioners introduce themselves. Present were **Commissioner George Moses** from Boise, **Commissioner Julie Kane** from Lapwai, **Co Chairman Allen Andersen** from Pocatello, **Co Chairman Evan Frasure** from Pocatello, **Commissioner Lorna Finman** from the Coeur d'Alene area, and **Commissioner Lou Esposito**, from Boise. Also present from the staff were **Keith Bybee** and **Cyd Gaudet**.

Co Chairman Frasure informed the audience that the commission's job today was to create a legal record, known as the findings of fact then asked **Commissioner Kane** to outline the legal requirements that the commission must follow. **Commissioner Kane** explained that redistricting is done every ten years after the census to make sure that each vote counts equally. She advised that the Idaho Constitution sets the number of districts to be between 30 and 35, and states that each district has to be equal within 10%. Idaho Statutes also require that the commission shall to the maximum extent possible preserve traditional neighborhoods and communities of interest, if possible avoid drawing oddly shaped districts, the commission should also avoid dividing counties whenever possible and if counties are divided they have to be joined with adjacent counties and a highway needs to connect those counties. The commission must also attempt to honor precinct lines and cannot consider incumbents nor protect their respective parties.

Co Chairman Andersen also explained that the commission has a 90 day deadline so they are trying to work as fast as they can.

Co Chairman Frasure then indicated that a dilemma that the commission has is that Idaho grew by 20%, however the Pocatello area did not grow as much as the rest of the state. He explained that the prior average population in a district was 36,000 and that the new districts will be just about 45,000. As the Pocatello area did not grow in population the district will have to geographically expand. He explained that the commission has to decide how to draw the new lines to be as fair to everyone as possible and the commission is seeking public testimony to determine how to do this. He also explained that as he and **Co Chairman Andersen** are both from Pocatello they would be shifting the chairman position half way through the meeting.

First to be called to testify was **Mr. Dale Hatch**, the Bannock County Clerk. He explained that the counties in south eastern Idaho; Bear Lake, Franklin, Caribou, Oneida, and Bannock County, work well together, we share responsibility with juveniles, fire districts, and ambulances. He would like to recommend that the five counties be in one district, up to the Portneuf Gap in Bannock (or some version of that making the numbers correct). **Commissioner Moses** then indicated that the commission has been asked by other county clerks to draw the district lines along physical boundaries, such as roads, and asked if **Mr. Hatch** had been able to do that in drawing his precinct lines. Mr. Hatch explained that they try to keep their precincts at 800 people and look for a boundary such as a major road to draw their lines. **Co Chairman Frasure** then commented that Bannock County has some very clean precinct lines.

Next to testify was **Mr. Rick Keller** from the Idaho Farm Bureau. He asked that the commission not isolate cities or create islands around cities and then surround them with large rural districts. He also requested that some of the rural areas be included with

some of the urban populations to provide balance as rural and urban citizens do have some common interests such as taxes, education, and health care. He also requested that county splits to be kept to a minimum. **Mr. Keller** also mentioned the problems with the current District 31. **Co Chairman Frasure** indicated that the commission had heard a lot about District 31 earlier in the day and indicated that with the current state law has changed with regard to a state road connection throughout the district. **Co Chairman Frasure** further stated that state law does not allow for dividing precincts without an affirmative vote from five of the Commissioners. **Muriel Roberts** from the League of Women Voters was next to testify. She stated that they are very happy to have a citizen's commission doing the redistricting and believes that the commission will do a fine job.

Next called was **Ms. Betty Moore** who stated that she had some concerns, however with the information about the guidelines that the commission must follow her concerns have been alleviated. She also stated that she believes it is important to have Democrats represented in the state.

Ms. Verna Walker was called and indicated that she did not wish to testify.

Next called was **Mr. Mark Balzer** who indicated that partisanship should be kept out of this decision. When viewing the plans that have been published, it is clear they have partisan gain in mind. He asked the commission to represent the people of Idaho and follow the guidelines set forth so that they not create a district like District 31.

At this time **Co Chairman Frasure** moved the gavel to **Co Chairman Andersen** who called **Mr. Cecil Sweeten** to testify. **Mr. Sweeten** is the chairman of the Oneida County Commission. He expressed the concern that for the last ten years they have been in a district with Cassia County and this is not working. He indicated that they have ongoing relationships with Bannock, Franklin, Bear Lake, and Caribou Counties, their interests are tied together whether it be the juvenile justice system or jail service. Bannock County up to the Portneuf Gap should be combined with Oneida and the other four counties. **Mr. Sweeten** explained that although he is a Republican, he would rather work with a Democrat from Bannock County than a Republican from Cassia County as it's just too far away and they don't care, they only show up during election time.

Next called was **Mayor Steve England** from Chubbuck who pointed out that Chubbuck grew 44% over the last ten years. He indicated that the communities along the I-15 corridor have a common bond and a good working relationship. **Co Chairman Andersen** then pointed out that this area is too large for one district and asked **Mayor England** if he had any recommendations along those lines. **Mayor England** suggested that by putting Pocatello and Chubbuck together there would be 70,000 people so they would need to share with communities to the north. He did share his concern with drawing the borders west of American Falls as they don't have the same relationships with that area of the state. He further indicated that he felt that combining them with Teton County was out of the question. **Co Chairman Frasure** asked how it had worked in the past when they had two legislative districts in Chubbuck. **Mayor England** advised that he remembered that everyone was involved with the city and that they got a good response from all. He also indicated that there was good representation even though the representatives did not live in their city.

Senator Diane Bilyeu was next called to testify. She is currently serving as State Senator from District 29. She wanted to state that she is glad that we now have a citizen's commission doing the redistricting. She thanked the commissioners for taking on this process. She wanted to discuss drawing of the congressional district lines and asked the commission if they would consider a north south split. She also stated that she would hope that the commission avoids splitting Boise and Ada County. She pointed out that even in an east west split she would like to see Boise and Ada County in one district. With regard to legislative districts in Bannock County, she feels that Bannock is deserving of 2 legislative districts, not 3. She pointed out that it is most important to preserve cities and communities of interest, and suggests that the entire reservation be kept whole in one district to protect that community of interest. She also recommends keeping the southern portion of Bannock County united with rest of the county. She pointed out that the residents of all cities recreate with the other. Her final remark was that we are one in Bannock County, don't divide us.

Co Chairman Frasure indicated that it is a real dilemma to draw these map, and that the commission could not draw anything like District 31 anymore. He then asked if you don't go thru Bonneville County where do you put Bannock County. At that time **Senator Bilyeu** indicated that this is a problem for the commission and she just wants to protect Bannock County.

Co Chairman Frasure then discussed congressional boundaries and that the commission has to move 58,000 from one district to the other, and that 13 maps have already been submitted to the commission. He explained that some of the maps do split the north and south by tying the people in Bingham and Bonneville connected to Coeur d'Alene. He then encouraged everyone to go onto the website and Maptitude and welcomed everyone to start drawing plans. **Commissioner Moses** then challenged everyone to go onto Maptitude and draw at least 7 districts, or 20% of the State, to give the audience a good understanding of how this works. He asked that if they are happy with their map, to please submit it to the commission.

Mr. Howard Manwaring was next called to testify. He is a Bannock County Commissioner and indicated he realized what a great challenge that commission has ahead of it. He indicated that the problem expressed by his constituents is that counties with rural people in them get left out of the process. He feels it is important to include rural interests in the process. He stated that there are marvelous people in Pocatello and Chubbuck however people in small counties get left out. He indicated that they have a tremendous working relationship with Oneida, Power, Bear Lake and Caribou Counties because they spend a lot of time with them. He said he understood that with the population as it is they will get divided, but asked the commission to please follow the law and not make a silly districts where in one you go from Bear Lake to Teton, and in the other you have to go into Utah to go to rest of the district. He then asked the commission to be fair to both political parties and everyone in this county. He stated he often doesn't know whether people from those counties are D's or R's, they just have a lot in common. **Co Chairman Andersen** asked **Mr. Manwaring** if he had any thoughts on decreasing the districts below 35. **Mr. Manwaring** advised that decreasing the number of legislative districts has advantages and disadvantages and he did not have a specific opinion but would not be opposed to it. **Co Chairman Frasure** advised there would need some 15,000 population from Bannock County in order to create a district from the counties **Manwaring** described. He state that he understood that they will have to be split in some way and would prefer that they take a small portion of Bannock County and put them in with the south continues where they already have relationships.

Ms. Laverne Beech, the Public Affairs Manager for the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes next brought a resolution from the Fort Hall Business Council. The resolution asked the commission to consider the Fort Hall Reservation a community of interest. She explained that it is a challenge to get reservation voters interested because they don't feel their vote makes a difference because they are currently split into three districts and four counties. They feel that one way to turn this around is to have the reservation be in only one district, and they prefer district 29, as she explained that they are more aligned with Bannock County as opposed to Bingham or Power County. **Co Chairman Frasure** indicated that Bingham County testified earlier that they have just enough people for one district, including their portion of the reservation, and asked Ms. Beech for any suggestions. Ms. Beech indicated that they have a good relationship with the Bingham County Commission, however just in terms of geography the people from the reservation do go to Pocatello for shopping, etc. **Commissioner Moses** then asked if the population of the reservation is evenly distributed. Ms. Beech indicated that the majority of the population is in Bingham County, the second highest population would be in Bannock County and then the next would be in Power County, she also indicated that there is no population in Caribou County on the reservation. A copy of the resolution is available in the commission office.

Next called was **Mr. James Ruchti** who explained that a lot of his concerns have been put to rest by the guidelines which the commissioned outlined. He urged the commission to look at the perspective of the legislators who are passionate about doing a good job for their constituents but sometimes have road blocks put in the way representing everyone. An example of this would be District 31 in which it is very difficult to represent people from very different cultural and economic areas. He pointed out that it is not just the people in the communities of interest that are important, it is also that their representatives be from those communities of interest so that they can be passionate about representing them in the legislature. **Co Chairman Frasure** then pointed out that they had 30,000 people so they needed 15,000 more, and asked which county, Bannock, Bonneville, or Cassia to take them from. **Mr. Ruchti** indicated that he would like to keep Bannock County whole; he suggested that Cassia maybe a good fit, and he did not think that Bonneville would work well. He also indicated that Inkorn has ties to Pocatello and Chubbuck. He also sees the reservation as having a strong tie to Chubbuck and Pocatello.

Mr. Nate Murphy was next to testify, he is an elected trustee of School District 25, and a senior at Idaho State University, and has been working on Maptitude. He indicated that he did not feel that a congressional division of north and south was silly, and that the current configuration is the definition of gerrymandering. He went on to state that it can be done without splitting counties and keeping all of Ada County and Boise whole, as he feels that this is the most important community of interest in the state. He also thinks that Fort Hall needs to be put together as a community of interest. He also suggested that Oneida and Bear Lake Counties should be split apart and use a north south direction so that it goes around Bannock County, as he believes the plan will be challenged in court if you split Bannock County down the center. He also suggested the reason there was reform in the 1990's was to avoid taking any urban areas and breaking them into tiny splices and giving them away to rural areas. He stated that by adding the southern portion of Bannock County to those southern counties you are really breaking Pocatello into three districts. He then discussed a map that **Co Chairman Frasure** had drawn which divided Pocatello and questioned how that would serve the best interests of the community. He feels he has a good solution in that District 29 has approximately 45,000 residents and District 30 needs to gain 6,000 in population. He suggested that if the commission take Precinct 20 from Bingham and add it into Bannock, and then adds in Precincts 3 and 6 from Power County it gets you to the right amount. You then need to adjust the northern border of district 30 and drop it south along some major roads between the college district and the more industrial areas which would split less of the community of interest. **Mr. Murphy** indicated that he has drawn these maps however he has not submitted them but agreed that he would submit them for review. He also pointed out that he feels communities of interest are more important than just working relationships. **Co Chairman Frasure** then made note of **Mr. Murphy's** comments regarding his plan. He explained that the plan he was referring to was one that he had drawn quickly and never intended to have it submitted. However, he

explained that the President Pro Tempore hit the send button without realizing the implications of that action, and as soon as this was noticed the plan was removed from the website. **Co Chairman Frasure** then asked **Mr. Murphy** to expand upon his congressional district ideas. **Mr. Murphy** stated that his plan split Oneida and Bear Lake and go straight north on both sides of Bannock County; keep all the counties whole on the left side up to the Bingham area and the right side up to just below Bonneville. **Co Chairman Frasure** asked if he was able to keep with the guideline regarding counties being connected by state roads, and **Mr. Murphy** indicated that he had used I15 all the way up. He indicated that his plan also gets rid of the donut and creates two clean districts for Bannock County. **Commissioner Moses** congratulated **Mr. Murphy** for using Maptitude and encouraged him to submit his plan. He then discussed a contest in Virginia where college students were asked to submit plans and one of their plans was actually submitted to the legislature for consideration. **Commission Esposito** reminded that group that the commission is here to solicit public input and that no decisions have been made at this time. He encouraged **Mr. Murphy** and the audience to submit any maps that they are taking the time to draw, along with any written testimony they may have. He reminded the audience that they know their communities of interest better than anyone. We are looking for fresh ideas and will be taking a close look at anything that is submitted. So if anybody is telling you that it is a waste of time or that the commission has made up its collective mind, nothing could be further from the truth.

Next to testify was **Mr. Brian Blad**, the Mayor of Pocatello who thanked the commission for coming. He explained that the city has a good working relationship with the City of Chubbuck, the County Commissioners, and the Sho-Ban Tribe, and surrounding counties. He stressed the importance of keeping the I-15 corridor as intact as possible. He also indicated that it is important to keep Pocatello as intact as possible. He stated that he recognized that the commission has a problem and although he doesn't have a solution, he would like to see the commission keep communities together. He asked that the commission do what is right, follow the law and do what is needed to protect the interests of the people on this side of the state. **Co Chairman Frasure** thanked the Mayor for coming in and advised him that the very first person to testify before the commission was the Mayor of Boise who asked the same thing in keeping Boise whole. He then discussed the problem with precinct lines due to development and how sometimes the county clerks have had to go to individual homes to see where the master bedroom is to determine what precinct the residents should vote in. **Mayor Blad** stated that he understands that they will be split however feels that the commission can protect the common interests by using the I-15 corridor area, however if they go west of American Falls it defeats the collective common interests. He also indicated that the tribe has some of the same interests, and that Inkom and McCammon also have the same interests. He also explained that Chubbuck has 600 new jobs coming in and that ISU has the potential of 800 new jobs so Pocatello is going to grow quite a bit.

Mr. Ralph "Moon" Wheeler was next to testify. He stated that he has been a Councilman, a Mayor, a member of the House, a State Senator, and he is speaking on behalf of the County Commissioners. He explained that the commissioners have not made a choice yet but pointed out how the history of Power County has been impacted by redistricting. Until this past ten years, Power has been aligned with Bannock County. He explained that the current District 27 is not a community of interest and that they would like to be removed from this district. He indicated that they would like to be back with Bannock or Bingham County. He also indicated that District 31 is a problem and the solution is to put Oneida back into the fold. He suggested that by moving Power County and Bingham County it will solve the District 31 problem. He also disagreed with **Mr. Murphy's** solution for the reservation by splitting Power County down the middle and then taking a big chunk of Bingham County that keeps the reservation whole, this is the tail wagging the dog. His final point was nine representatives were more than the current 6 for Bannock County and that it would be beneficial for Bannock County. **Co Chairman Frasure** thanked **Mr. Wheeler** for his service and asked him to share how it was when he represented half of Chubbuck. **Mr. Wheeler** indicated that he did what was best for the good of most of the people.

Mr. Don Harold was next to testify, he indicated that he has played around with Maptitude and he started with the congressional districts. He indicated that he found a problem in that if you try to split the north and south you end up with a very long distance for a potential representative to travel. He suggested that it would be better if Idaho grew enough to have three congressional districts. He also indicated that he feels that the Shoshone Bannock Nation should be kept whole. He also felt that lower Bannock County should be put in District 31. He indicated that he has found that to divide legislative districts by using major highway doesn't seem to work well. He suggested that if the commission could take the Shoshone Bannock Nation and Power County and then go from the Portneuf Gap down to south county and put Oneida in that, it would start to fix District 31. He also indicated that in winter months getting up and down the roads is very difficult, he explained that you can live in Oneida County and in January you may not be able to get to Teton County. Then in the spring you can have a landslide and have the same problem.

Commissioner Kane then asked **Mr. Harold** to please submit his map to which **Mr. Harold** stated that it was hard to get the population divided up. **Commissioner Kane** indicated that she felt his pain.

Commissioner Steve Hadley, the Chairman of the Bannock County Commission, was next to testify. He stated he appreciated the commission and their desire to take public comment. He is a prior legislator for Bingham, Bannock and Power County and he

indicated that he didn't have a problem serving those three counties. He explained that these three counties have the same interests and desires, and a lot in common. He urged the commission not to let this process get as far as the courts.

Next called was **Ms Michele Sherrer**, a County Commissioner from Gem County. She thanked the commission for going state wide and thought that this was an exciting opportunity to learn about and travel the state. She requested that the commission represent all of the citizens of the state. She encourages them to be fair and equitable to everyone and to follow the law and not let this end up in court. She stated that it is important to make decisions by population and to not divide the counties. She advised the commission that she had done a plan in 5 hours with 35 districts. She also felt there are good reasons to look at something other than 35 districts. She encouraged the commission to look at judicial districts or transportation departments. She gave her appreciation for the commission's service and time. **Commissioner Moses** then pointed out that 85% of all redistricting plans in the United States are challenged. **Ms. Sherrer** pointed out she had confidence in the Commission's abilities to keep it out of the courts.

Next called was **Mr. Daniel Chadwick**, Executive Director of the Idaho Association of Counties. He stated that he is the most fortunate person in the room as he has worked with counties governments for the last 28 years. He stated that he may be submitting a plan; however he does have a good data base of county elected officials that he offered to the commission that they can use to do outreach. **Co Chairman Frasure** thanked him for his offer.

Co Chairman Andersen then indicated that was all that had signed up to speak, however the commission would take comments from others who wished to testify.

Mr. Craig Parrish, Legislative District Chairman for District 29 then indicated that he thinks there is a community of interest with regard to Bannock and Oneida, Bear Lake, Power, Franklin, and Caribou Counties. He agreed with the idea of looping south Bannock County and a portion of Pocatello into what is now District 31, and making Fort Hall a whole part of what is now 29 and maybe bring in Power County. He stated that having 9 legislators from Bannock County can be a help, not a harm. He also indicated that Magic Valley does not have the same interests as this area and that putting Power County with them has left that county unrepresented. He suggested bringing them back to the rest of the group. **Co Chairman Andersen** explained that the commission will take every bit of information presented, will look at the maps sent in, and will make every attempt to come up with a solution and submit it to the Secretary of State prior to the deadline. He then thanked everyone for taking their time in coming to the hearing.

Co Chairman Frasure recognized former **Representative Pete Black** who served on the redistricting committee 20 years ago, and thanked him for coming out.

Co Chairman Andersen then adjourned the hearing at 8:55 pm.